



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Mayor Kelly Announces Next Phase of Reopening for City Community Centers

**CHATTANOOGA, Tenn.** (Dec. 1, 2021)—Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly announces the next phase of reopening for the City's Community Centers, effective as of today. Most Community Centers are reopening—with the last remaining exceptions being East Lake due to remodeling; as well as Cromwell and Frances B. Wyatt, both of which are closed due to staffing shortages.

In light of improving pandemic conditions, a mid-November phase of reopening included the Avondale, Brainerd, Carver, Hixson, John A. Patten, Shepherd, South Chattanooga, and Westside Community Centers.

Heading into the winter months, Community Centers provide a safe space for youth and families, and make neighborhood-based mentorship and programming available to City residents. As Centers are reopened, they also serve as an access-point for COVID-19 vaccination clinics offered by the City's Office of Community Health. Community Center hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"Community Centers play a critical role in uplifting our city's youth by offering them healthy activities and access to mentors in a safe and educational environment," said Mayor Kelly. "I'm delighted to see most of our Centers reopen and encourage everyone to help *keep* them open by getting vaccinated—to protect yourselves and our city's most vulnerable residents."

The city's Department of Community Development is phasing in programming and other opportunities over the coming months, eventually allowing Community Centers to be booked for events and restoring all programming over time, in line with sustained gains in pandemic conditions. To address the current staffing shortages at the Cromwell and Frances B. Wyatt Community Centers, the Department will soon be posting position vacancies and taking applications via the City job board at [Chattanooga.gov](http://Chattanooga.gov).

Earlier this year, the mayor ordered all City Community Centers closed amid surging cases of the COVID-19 Delta variant. In the months since, vaccinations have increased, and Hamilton County has seen a sharp decline in viral infections as measured by new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. Community Centers will follow CDC guidelines for social distancing and enhanced cleaning, and officials will continue to monitor pandemic conditions to ensure reopenings are conducted safely.

“This holiday season, vaccines are the miracle that allow us to gather in ways that simply were not safe last year, or earlier this year as the Delta variant surged,” said Dr. Mary Lambert, Chattanooga’s director of community health. “We’re fortunate to have ready access to such an incredible safeguard against hospitalization, disability, and death. We are diligently monitoring infection and vaccination rates as these critical community resources reopen, and strongly encourage all Chattanooga residents to get vaccinated as soon as possible—especially now that many younger residents are eligible.”

The Department of Community Development encourages anyone interested in working at area Community Centers to monitor [cha.city/jobs](https://cha.city/jobs) for opportunities to apply.

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